

**SENATE  
REPUBLICANS**

**92ND LEGISLATURE**

**MAJOR  
ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

# Improving Michigan's Economy

Senate Republicans approached 2003 and 2004 with sweeping initiatives to improve Michigan's economic future. The goal of creating good-paying jobs and stimulating economic growth was implemented in the JOBS I plan and capped with the addition of the JOBS II plan.

## 2004

- ***Tax Relief for New Jobs (SBT Hires)***  
Legislation to provide tax relief for new jobs by offering a tax credit to small businesses that add jobs was signed into law in August. Senate Bill 1274, now Public Act 319, is a reintroduction of SB 1093 which was vetoed in July. The aim of the legislation is to provide a credit that would offset the SBT cost associated with hiring a new employee. (*Public Act 319 of 2004*)
- ***Eliminating Taxation of Federal and State Research Funds***  
Legislation to create a Single Business Tax deduction for state and federal business research grants was signed into law in July. The legislation will help lure high-tech businesses to Michigan. (*Public Act 258 of 2004*)
- ***Eliminating Red Tape***  
Legislation that will help spur job creation and economic growth in Michigan by making the permitting process more efficient was signed into law in July. (*Public Acts 259-265, 277-281, 315 of 2004*)
- ***Pause Taxes for Start-Up Businesses***  
Legislation that will exempt qualified start-up businesses, with local approval, from certain taxes during their first five years of business was signed into law in August. (*Public Acts 321-324 of 2004*)
- ***Forestry Management Package***  
Legislation to protect Michigan forests for residents, tourists and job providers was signed into law in May. Among other things, Public Acts 123-125 establish forest pilot areas to determine the most efficient and effective methods of harvesting timber while protecting wildlife habitats. (*Public Acts 123-125 of 2004*)
- ***Life Sciences***  
A \$15 million increase in money allocated to Life Sciences in the fiscal year 2005 budget demonstrated a clear decision to increase Michigan's dedication to bringing new, innovative jobs to the state, and for Michigan to once again lead in technological innovation.

## 2003

- ***Tool & Die***  
Revitalizing the state's floundering tool & die industry, which has been especially hard hit with job losses and overseas competition, by providing tax relief through Tool & Die Recovery Zones. (*Public Acts 273 and 274 of 2003*)

- ***Tax Relief for Economic Expansion (TREE)***  
Providing a tax incentive for small start-up businesses modeled after our successful Renaissance Zone Program. A business qualified as a “start-up” would be exempt from property taxes, state and city income tax for the first five years and exempt from the Single Business Tax (SBT) in any of their first five years that they do not make a profit. (*Vetoed by governor, Senate Bills 862-873 and 875*)
- ***MEGA Reauthorization***  
Reauthorizing the Michigan Economic Growth Authority, which would have expiree on Dec. 31, to continue the state’s main tax-incentive granting authority used to spur economic development, (*Public Acts 248-251 of 2003*)
- ***Venture Capital***  
Creating a venture capital investment incentive by offering income and Single Business Tax breaks to spur new investment in Michigan businesses, particularly in the high-tech and life-sciences industries. (*Public Acts 296 & 297 of 2003*)
- ***CMI/Brownfield Development***  
Establishing a Clean Michigan Initiative revolving loan program to accelerate the cleanup of abandoned brownfield sites. (*Public Acts 252 & 253 of 2003*)
- ***Public Works Programs***  
Expediting the 2002 voter-approved Sewer Bond Initiative to allow communities to start much-needed sewer projects sooner. (*Presented to governor, Senate Bill 833*)
- ***Small-business Czar***  
Calling on the Michigan Economic Development Corporation to provide a small-business “czar” who would focus on small-business startups. (*Vetoed by governor, Senate Bill 840*)
- ***Manufacturing Czar***  
Calling on the Michigan Economic Development Corporation to provide a manufacturing “czar” who would spearhead efforts to create and retain manufacturing jobs. (*Vetoed by governor, House Bill 5306*)

## Enriching Education

Senate Republicans once again put education as a top priority, focusing on making students and schools the most debated issue over the last decade.

### 2004

- ***MEAP Alternative***  
The Senate approved legislation that would replace the Michigan Educational Assessment Program test for high-school juniors with a test based on a college-entrance exam. (*Presented to governor, Senate Bills 1153-1157*)
- ***Parental Involvement Plan***

Senate Republicans passed legislation that requires a school board, or the board of directors of a public school academy, to adopt and implement an involvement plan designed to encourage parental participation by the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year. (*Public Act 107 of 2004*)

### **2003**

- ***Merit Award Scholarship Program Protected***

Senate Republicans turned back the efforts of Gov. Granholm and others to eliminate the Michigan Merit Award Scholarship program in 2003. (*Public Act 186 of 2003*)

## **Healthcare Initiatives**

### **2004**

- ***Patient's right to view medical records***

This law established a procedure through which a patient or a patient's representative could obtain timely access to examine or obtain a copy of the patient's medical record. (*Public Acts 47 & 48 of 2004*)

- ***Kevin's Law***

The "Kevin's Law" package creates an outpatient treatment pathway as an alternative to hospitalization for individuals with severe mental illness. (*Presented to the governor, Senate Bills 683-686*)

- ***Detroit/Wayne County Mental Health Board***

Legislation addressing concerns surrounding the Detroit-Wayne County Community Mental Health Agency was passed in December. The legislation requires the agency, due to its size and complexity, to convert to an independent authority, a separate legal entity, as defined in the Mental Health Code. (*Presented to governor, Senate Bills, 591, 1076-1079*)

### **2003**

- ***Care and Competitiveness***

Senate Republicans made it easier and less expensive for employers to provide healthcare insurance coverage to their employees by eliminating tax penalty on employer-funded health benefits. (*Public Acts 240 & 241 of 2003*)

- ***Small Market Reform***

Senate Republicans took the lead in making it more economical for small businesses to provide healthcare coverage by allowing Blue Cross Blue Shield (the state's largest insurer) greater options for providing insurance. (*Public Act 59 of 2003*)

# Families, Children and the Community

2004

- ***Lead Screening Package***

The Senate unanimously approved legislation that helps protect children from lead poisoning, ensuring that they won't endure the mental and developmental disabilities that lead poisoning causes. (*Presented to governor, Senate Bill 753,756*)

- ***Child Support Package***

The Senate passed legislation to expedite the collection procedure for child support payments. The proposed laws would assist the Family Independence Agency in increasing child support collections on arrearages. (*Presented to governor, Senate Bills 1447-1450*)

- ***Grandparent Visitation***

Legislation allowing grandparents to seek visitation orders received unanimous support in the Michigan Senate. A 2003 decision by the Michigan Supreme Court struck down the state's law allowing grandparents to seek visitation. (*Presented to governor, Senate Bill 727*)

- ***Drug treatment courts***

This law allows the creation of drug treatment courts and juvenile drug treatment courts. The courts would offer supervised treatment programs for people who abused or were dependent on alcohol or a controlled substance. (*Public Act 226 of 2004*)

- ***Marriage Preservation Act***

Senate Republicans initiated a package of legislation known as the Marriage and Family Preservation Program. The legislation creates a tax credit of up to \$50 to cover the cost of a premarital or marital education, or a counseling program for strengthening or preserving marriage. (*Presented to governor, Senate Bills 959, 961, 963, 964, 966*)

- ***Reverse 911***

Reverse 911 would allow emergency service responders to use telephone numbers to contact residents regarding an imminent danger or crisis that may affect their health, safety or welfare. (*Presented to governor, Senate Bill 1267*)

- ***Help America Vote Act -HAVA***

The HAVA legislation amended Michigan Election Law to bring Michigan into compliance with the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2000. The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) is a new federal law that seeks to strengthen the states' election processes by improving voting systems, providing greater access at the polls, and making it easier for disabled Americans and military personnel to vote. (*Public Act 92 of 2004*)

## 2003

- ***The Michigan Driver Responsibility Program***  
Senate Bill 509 established a fee program for drivers who accrue seven or more points in two years or for being found guilty of specific driving-related offenses like drunk driving. (*Public Act 165 of 2003*)
- ***Senate Cracks Down on Crystal Meth***  
Senate Bills 648-652, 698 and 777 provide tools for law enforcement and increased penalties for those who participate in the production of methamphetamine by owning or possessing the places, chemicals or equipment used in production of the illegal stimulant. (*Public Acts 307-311, 313 of 2003*)

## Consumer Protection

### 2004

- ***Creating tough identity-theft protection measures***  
The ID-theft package is a broad effort to stop the explosion of identity theft in Michigan and help victims get their good credit back. The group of bills provides a comprehensive overhaul of Michigan's ID theft laws to help law enforcement officers track down and punish identity thieves and help victims restore their credit histories. (*Presented to governor, Senate Bills 220, 657, 792-795, 798, 803, 1384*)
- ***Children's Protection Registry***  
Senate Republicans passed legislation that gives parents, law enforcement and prosecutors the ability to protect children from the predators that are responsible for the ever-growing deluge of unsolicited and inappropriate e-mail that plagues the internet. (*Public Act 241 of 2004*)
- ***Cell Phone voyeurism***  
Senate Republicans passed legislation that creates specific prohibitions and criminal penalties for acts of electronic voyeurism. Those acts include capturing or transmitting a visual image of a person undressed or wearing only undergarments. Examples of circumstances or places where one might normally have such an expectation are private or public restrooms, showers, tanning beds and locker rooms. The legislation also prohibits and creates stronger penalties for distributing such images, and provides stronger penalties for repeat offenders. (*Public Act 155 of 2004*)
- ***Scam Free Zone***  
Senate Republicans passed legislation to crack down on scam artists who prey on vulnerable citizens. The bill closed a loophole so people can be better protected against criminals using false pretenses to commit crimes. (*Public Act 154 of 2004*)

### 2003

- ***Stronger Credit Unions***  
Michigan consumers will see better services from their credit unions and more people will be able to join the non-profit financial institutions under the Senate Republican-initiated Credit Union Act of 2003. The act empowers credit unions to establish updated and appropriate guidelines and serve a mobile and changing membership, as well as be

subject to the safety and soundness provisions enforced by state regulators. (*Public Acts 215-221 of 2003*)

## Land Use

### 2004

- ***CORE Package – Creating Opportunities for Renewed Economies***  
The Republican led Senate continued to work diligently to revitalize downtowns and commerce centers across Michigan and create job opportunities. CORE Legislation is geared toward expanding and coordinating many state economic programs to operate more effectively, as well as provide incentives for growth in cities and villages. (*Presented to governor, Senate Bills 1201 and 1202*)

### 2003

- ***Land Bank Fast Track***  
The package aids urban redevelopment by establishing an authority to clear property titles and move tax reverted property to private ownership. (*Public Act 259-263 of 2003*)
- ***Principle Shopping Districts***  
Another recommendation of the Land Use Leadership Council, House Bill 4263 provided cities with the tools they need to make improvements to certain areas in order to improve the local business retail climate. (*Public Act 209 of 2003*)
- ***Planned Unit Development.*** The legislation allows a municipality to approve a planned unit development with open space not connected to the development. The legislation was recommended by the Land Use Leadership Council. (*Public Acts 227-229 of 2003*)

## Conserving Our Environment

Protecting Michigan's natural resources continued to be a top priority for Senate Republicans in 2004.

### 2004

- ***Recycling Improvements***  
Legislation establishing a Recycling Advisory Council and Statewide Recycling Coordinator was passed by Senate Republicans. Senate Bill 790 creates a Recycling Advisory Council to help develop a comprehensive statewide recycling program. (*Presented to governor, Senate Bills 790 & 854*)
- ***Restricting Out-of-State Waste***  
Michigan has moved one step closer to having the out-of-state waste restrictions residents have been calling for, thanks to a ruling issued in October in federal court upholding state law. Under the new rules, all Canadian and out-of-state waste is required to meet the same stringent standards Michigan has for its own waste. (*Public Acts 34,36, 38,39,41,43 & 44 of 2004*)
- ***Chemical spills protection measures on the Great Lakes***

New laws require a person responsible for spilling harmful materials into surface or groundwater to immediately report the spill to local authorities under legislation signed into law in June. (*Public Acts 142 & 143 of 2004*)

### **2003**

- ***Protecting Michigan's Aquifer***

This law requires the Department of Environmental Quality to compile a mapping of groundwater resources in Michigan. In addition to creating this significant mapping and inventory, the law requires a more consistent water use reporting program. (*Public Act 148 of 2003*)

## **Election Consolidation**

### **2003**

- ***Streamlined Elections***

Senate Republicans accomplished one of their long-standing priorities: consolidating the dates for municipal elections. (*Public Acts 299-306 of 2003*)

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